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Unclassified Summary of Public Positions on INF

UK UPI reported from London yesterday that the Thatcher government is talking with the J. Walter Thompson Agency about a "sophisticated campaign" both to counter the peace movement and to support the zero option. The report noted that final approval of the effort lies with Defense Secretary Heseltine and that London is concerned lest it is construed by the public as a political campaign for the Conservatives using the taxpayer's money.

West Germany SPD candidate Vogel yesterday called again for the US to make a counterproposal at Geneva "that would lead from the zero option to a negotiating position." The FDP wound up its party congress yesterday by voting by a large majority to continue the coalition with the CDU/CSU after the 6 March elections if the latter fail to win an absolute majority. Defense Minister Woerner, in a news service interview on Saturday, rejected the latest Soviet proposal for a European nuclear-free zone as a "diversionary maneuver" to shift the focus of disarmament negotiations from INF. Woerner also accused Moscow of injecting another element into the "war of nerves" between Bonn and the USSR prior to the West German elections. He also echoed Kohl's and Genscher's most recent campaign rhetoric that a SPD victory would endanger the security of the West.

USSR TASS continues to stress the same themes in its commentaries on the Vice President's trip--that the aim of the Bush mission is to convince the West Europeans of Washington's peaceful intentions and to extract from them a reaffirmation of the zero option. The latest TASS piece, published yesterday, further elaborates that the trip is a reflection of US nervousness over the growth of the European peace movement and that the Vice President's task is to "neutralize the attractiveness of the peace initiatives advanced by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries."

China Beijing's official news agency over the weekend released a reflective analysis of the INF issue that was relatively critical of the USSR but not the US. Referring to the "rivalry between the US and Soviet Union for supremacy in Europe," the article noted that Moscow has launched a propaganda offensive to blame the US for this rivalry and "nuclear escalation." The piece indicated that particularly the Andropov proposal has influenced European leaders, and that this has put the US in a difficult position, since by holding to the zero option the US gives Moscow the opportunity to "drive a wedge into the NATO Alliance." The article observed that Vice President Bush will try to coordinate Allied views to strengthen NATO's "collective stand in negotiations with Moscow."

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